

**Contribution of the Government of Catalonia to the
consultation on the future policy for the trans-
European transport network**

Barcelona, 10 September 2010

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Introduction

On 4 May 2010, the European Commission published the working document *Consultation on the future trans-European transport network policy* [COM (2010) 212 final] as part of the policy review for the trans-European transport network (TEN-T).

In the same way that the Government of Catalonia contributed to the *Green Paper* on trans-European transport networks, it has decided to participate in the public consultation on the future policy of the trans-European transport network to transmit the view from a land with a maritime facade, a Region with both internal and external borders, with a tradition as a crossroads between the Iberian peninsula, North Africa and Central Europe and a clearly secular Mediterranean vocation.

Suitability and viability of the principles and criteria used to establish the Core Network. Which strong and weak points should be included?

The Government of Catalonia regards the TEN-T's two-layer methodology in a positive light. Nevertheless, it must bear in mind that some elements (nodes and links) could specialise in either freight or passenger transport when there is sufficient demand.

The definition of the TEN-T should be based on transparent and objective (qualitative and quantitative) criteria. However, in anticipation of the criteria's future development, the option to modify the possible elements which make up each of the two layers should be left open, providing that the Core Network is stable, but not static or temporarily closed. Being included in the Core Network should be the result of a combination of supply, demand and quality of service, all in a dynamic process.

Similarly, the needs and contributions of regions and cities should be taken into account in order to reach broad consensus. As the Government of Catalonia stated in its contribution to the aforementioned *Green Paper*, the criteria that should be promoted include:

- Sustainability, reducing the transport system's global impact on the environment and society.
- The efficiency of the whole system and its adaptation to social and productive needs. Profitability should underpin the implementation of any infrastructure or transport service project, but without neglecting social concerns.

- Territorial balance, reducing congestion in saturated areas and providing new opportunities for less developed areas.
- Orientation towards the global market, bearing in mind that strengthening trade with Asia through the Mediterranean has displaced the dominance of trans-Atlantic trade.
- Flexibility, which should allow for alternative solutions and re-routing options in the eventuality of a problem.

Inclusion of the Mediterranean corridor in the Core Network

Catalonia and the Government of Catalonia believe that the Mediterranean railway corridor must be included in the trans-European Core Network.

This trans-European corridor, which stretches from Algeciras to the French border, should have a double UIC track, rail links with the ports of Barcelona, Tarragona, Castelló, Valencia and Algeciras and links with the Rhone corridor.

This axis will have to guarantee a high capacity to transport goods, avoiding interruptions and bottlenecks, as well as ensure the speed and comfort of passenger transport and providing conditions that are comparable with the most demanding models.

Definition of European standards for railway interoperability

Thus, planning for trans-European networks should pay special attention to adapting these networks (including the Iberian peninsula's railway network) to standard regulations. The aim is to facilitate service interoperability, particularly for goods. This is indispensable to ensure the success of the railway sector's deregulation and for railways to become a main mode of transport.

Road network

With regard to the road network, trans-European planning should take into account the current design which includes toll roads running parallel alongside free circulation roads with similar capacity. The most appropriate methods should be applied to determine road capacity and discern the corresponding rates of use.

To what extent do additional infrastructural measures help to meet the aims of a transport system planned for the future, and how can this help be strengthened?

The problems associated to urban and metropolitan transport should be borne in mind, both from a point of view of its interaction with the interurban links or to the effects that congestion has on cities' sustainability and competitiveness.

Integration between TEN-T and the trans-Mediterranean network

On another scale, the TEN-T should be integrated with the trans-Mediterranean transport network (TMN-T), which is currently being developed, in order to help to eliminate peripheral elements and to strengthen interfaces with the European Union's external borders.

Furthermore, the promotion of intelligent transport systems (ITS) should not be detrimental to territorial balance. For this reason, a sufficient level of accessibility must be ensured for the entire EU territory by providing the necessary infrastructures. The promotion of these ITSs should take great care with regard to competition among stakeholders, especially in the private sector and in instances of public-private partnerships.

What general role could TEN-T planning have in enhancing transport's contribution to attaining the strategic objectives of "Europe 2020"?

The strategic objectives of "Europe 2020" include reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the use of renewable sources of energy. The "decarbonisation" of the European transport system should be achieved gradually through technological, modal and spatial changes. The growing importance of nodal infrastructures in managing circulation obliges us to pay more attention to this than we have in the past. Therefore, European planning has to include criteria regarding freight and passenger mobility in metropolitan areas.

The use of each mode in the different transport chain segments where these modes are most effective should lead us to reflect on the potential of each one and to reduce their emissions by developing the appropriate technology. Incentives to improve productivity in the railway sector, facilitate local maritime transport (with measures such as the "ecobonus") and the introduction of alternative energy sources in road transport should be a part of the planning process for trans-European networks. In addition, intermodal centres should also be enhanced by optimising intermodal shifts.

In addition, a policy ensuring territorial balance and that provides Southern Europe with more infrastructures would allow us to rationalise global flows between the EU and the rest of the world and would have positive effects on overall greenhouse gas emissions.

How can the EU's different sources of spending be better coordinated or combined to get faster results in TEN-T projects and attain policy objectives?

As indicated in the European Commission's working document, it is essential to determine how to identify projects with *European* added value, a concept that should

be objective, clear and transparent. Thus far, the trans-European transport networks have been supported through projects led by individual States, without a European-wide view being a necessary condition. As such, we need greater coordination in advance between TEN-T policy and the other sectorial policies supported by EU institutions, such as cohesion policies.

European projects should not be included in a country's or region's budget deficit

Proposals that encourage investment by countries and regions in trans-European added-value projects and that include incentives should be studied. Included amongst these initiatives would be to not consider the cost of funding these projects as deficits, or other initiatives that make investing in these projects more attractive.

The funds could also be better coordinated by carrying out a more accurate reading of the affected areas. The Regions should play a clear leading role here. For example, countries could be required to consult with their respective regions prior to establishing a position regarding the European Commission's proposals. This participation by the various Regions in the decision-making process would also help to improve the system's governance.

How can the EU's funding strategy coordinate or combine the EU's different sources of funding with national, public and private funding?

In order to overcome the current dispersal of EU instruments to fund transport infrastructures and the consequent multiplication of criteria and requirements established, a global financial approach should be adopted to ensure consistency and greater efficiency. In this case, the criterion of European added value should be a priority, with considerable attention to the cross-border factor (for both internal and external borders).

As described in the previous section, we must improve the governance of the EU's funding system for the transport infrastructure. This should be done by giving greater roles to local stakeholders, especially the Regions, and by firmly focusing State investment on promoting trans-European transport networks. Moreover, the TEN-T Executive Agency could be empowered to coordinate all EU funds dedicated to these networks.

Could the establishment of a European funding framework adequately fill the gaps in implementing TEN-T projects and fulfilling policy objectives?

As proposed in the European Commission's working document, the European Funding Framework should also be used to guide individual State investments. For this, it would be necessary to increase the TEN-T Executive Agency's powers as mentioned above.

However, it should be remind that investment in transport infrastructure will continue to be necessary despite the current financial crisis and budgetary restrictions, especially investment funded by the public sector. Investment must continue so that economic recovery is not threatened by a possible collapse of the transport system.

How could TEN-T policy take advantage of the new instruments and legal provisions proposed?

EU policy should prevail over those of EU Member States regarding large trans-European networks. This could be achieved by exerting greater control over implementation and financing mechanisms.

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